

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

LESSON VIII. AUGUST 25.

THE VISIT TO NAZARETH

Luke 4: 16-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"He came into His own, and they that were His own received Him not."—John 1: 11.

POINTED SUGGESTIONS.

By Rev. D. W. Snider. "Where had been brought up. That's it, just about every time. Whenever a boy brings fame to an obscure village or turns the drift of

it from ignoble fame, it is usually found that the home was behind him; earnest, faithful, godly parents to whom he had been subject. There is no substitute for home-training. "As his custom was." There it is again. "Habit," which some one says "is ten times nature." It is responsible for the doing of the best things, just the same as it is too often to be charged with the blame for the doing of the worst things. But this remark may be ventured: If Jesus had ever found Himself in the courses of a bad habit, He would have broken it. But, while Jesus kept up the exemplary habit of regular church-going, too many hunt lame excuses (the only kind to be found) for absenteeism. Name a good reason for failing to attend upon worship in the courses of a bad habit, He would have broken it. There is not one, unless

actual physical inability and the necessity it may impose upon another. A proper observance of the Sabbath begins with a ready response to the call to public worship. And as Jesus habitually found a special place, so ought that place to be found today. If men would set apart the Sabbath for such services, such inside and outside of the church building, as would minister to the spiritual betterment of themselves and their fellows, it would soon set this old world a-singing. Nothing would more quickly solve the problems of our times. What a pity it was that a scene which opened so auspiciously should have a closing so foolishly ignominious! That is the fatal twist which prejudice and jealousy can give to things. Curiosity waited upon what Jesus would say and was equal to the admiration of His manner of speech, but jealousy of localism prevented any application of His message; and Nazareth was Nazareth still.

greater concern to men than an answer to the question, What became of Herod or John? But think of this: Herod was a Sadducee, neither believing in the possibility of resurrection nor of angels or spirits. In some way, however, he associated what he was hearing about Jesus with the likelihood that John the Baptist was risen from the dead. Why? The study of that question will take you to the heart of the matter. Conscience upheaves a soul as surely as a storm upheaves the sea. Think further of this: Jesus Christ says that John the Baptist was a "burning and shining light." He says that "none born of women was greater than he," but Salome brought his head in a charger to her mother, Herodias, whose gratification at the sight was blood-thirstily exultant, and in her estimation he was the victim and she was victorious. Wherein the difference? Well, if the character of the one who passes the encomium has anything to do with the measurement of success, the life of John the Baptist was unquestionably a success, though it ended in so miserable a tragedy and at an age so young. The truth is, that the Forerunner of Jesus fulfilled in His lifetime all that was predicted concerning him, and it was declared that he should be great. See Luke 1: 15-16. His greatness was to consist in three things, and the question may be asked if they may not be pointed out as the elements of success, for any life, the elements without which any life is a failure, whatever appearance of fortuitous success it may show: 1. The sensual was held in subjection. 2. The spiritual was given pre-eminence and sway. 3. Such service was rendered as achieved results. The life of John the Baptist was one marked by depth of conviction and complete consecration.

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THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. Mark 6: 14-29. GOLDEN TEXT. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."—Rev. 2: 10. POINTED SUGGESTIONS. By Rev. D. W. Snider. At least two important themes are thrown to the surface for examination and spiritual pondering in the study of today's lesson. These may be named:—"The Upholds of a Guilty Conscience" and "What Constitutes Success?" The former will be learned from the experience of Herod—a pitiable experience, but as true life-like as pitiable. Nevertheless, his hell was of his own making. Conscience never lashes one because of the guilt of another. On the other hand, "What Constitutes Success?" will be studied by the tomb of John the Baptist, whether faithful disciples carried his several remains when his years only numbered thirty-three and when by his own plain speaking he brought an extraordinary career of popular regard and national usefulness to an abrupt and gruesome close. Of course, the question does not need to lie between the characters and careers of John the Baptist and Herod Antipas as to what a guilty soul will suffer in the cause of conscience will do or what a faithful righteousness, or as to which one represents the worthier choice or the loftier example. The principles of conduct and character, are universal and eternal and are, therefore, of

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